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HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS: HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS, INCLUDING ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES FOR IMPROVING THE EFFECTIVE ENJOYMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS

Albania, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Cape Verde, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Netherlands, Norway, Panama, Paraguay, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Samoa, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Venezuela: draft resolution

Strengthening of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights/Centre for Human Rights

The General Assembly,

Recalling, inter alia, its resolutions 48/141 of 20 December 1993 and 50/187 or 22 December 1995, and bearing in mind all relevant resolutions of the Economic and Social Council and the Commission on Human Rights, in particular Commission resolution 1996/82 of 24 April 1996,

Reaffirming that the promotion of universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms is one of the basic purposes of the United Nations enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and a priority activity of the Organization,

Recalling that in the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action the World Conference on Human Rights, held at Vienna from 14 to 25 June 1993, stressed the importance of strengthening the Centre for Human Rights of the Secretariat,[1]

Taking into account that in the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action the World Conference on Human Rights requested the Secretary-General and the General Assembly to take immediate steps to increase substantially the resources for the human rights programme, from within the existing and future regular budgets of the United Nations, and to take urgent steps to seek increased extrabudgetary resources,[2]

Taking into account also the establishment of the post of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, as well as the mandate for the post, including its coordinating role and its overall supervision of the Centre, as well as the request by the General Assembly in resolution 48/141 for appropriate staff and resources to enable the High Commissioner to fulfil his mandate,

Noting with concern that the response to these requests has not been commensurate with the needs, resulting in a serious and continuing imbalance between the mandates assigned to the High Commissioner and the Centre by the competent bodies of the United Nations system in the field of human rights and the resources available to fulfil all of these mandates,

Taking note with appreciation of the information provided by the High Commissioner with regard to the process of reorganizing the structure of the Centre for Human Rights with the aim of increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of the Centre and ensuring that all its mandate can be implemented,

Considering that this process will contribute to the strengthening of the functional framework for integrated and consolidated activities of the Secretariat in the field of human rights,

Mindful of situations in which rapid action by the High Commissioner is required in order to address urgent crises in the field of human rights,

Emphasizing that, while further improvement in the function and efficiency of the Centre, together with a strong emphasis on good management practices, is needed in order to enable the Centre to cope with its constantly increasing workload, good management practices need to be complemented by resources commensurate with mandates,

1. Supports and encourages the efforts of the Secretary-General to enhance the role and further improve the functioning of the Centre for Human Rights, as an integral part of the Secretariat of the United Nations, under the overall supervision of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights;

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[1] A/CONF.157/24 (Part I), chap. III, sect. II, para. 13.

[2] Ibid., para. 9.

2. Reiterates the need to ensure that all the necessary human, financial, material and personnel resources are provided from the regular budget of the United Nations without delay to the United Nations human rights programme to enable it to carry out its mandates efficiently, effectively and expeditiously;

3. Requests the Secretary-General to make available additional human and financial resources, from within the overall regular budget of the United Nations, and to enhance the capability of the High Commissioner and the Centre to fulfil effectively their mandates and their ability to carry out mandated operational activities and to coordinate efficiently with other relevant departments of the Secretariat, as well as other organs, bodies and specialized agencies of the United Nations system, including on logistical and administrative questions, having due regard to the need to finance and implement activities of the United Nations relating to development;

4. Supports fully the Secretary-General and the High Commissioner in their efforts to strengthen the human rights activities of the United Nations, inter alia, through reorganization of the structure of the Centre to improve its efficiency and effectiveness;

5. Encourages increased cooperation and coordination on human rights issues between the High Commissioner, acting within his mandate, and other departments and offices of the United Nations Secretariat;

6. Requests the Administrative Committee on Coordination to ensure that the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights/Centre for Human Rights can participate fully in all mechanisms related to the follow-up to major United Nations conferences, in particular the inter-agency task forces established for this purpose, and urges the High Commissioner to take an active part in this regard;

7. Requests the High Commissioner to continue to keep all States informed on a regular basis of the ongoing process of restructuring the Centre, inter alia through informal open briefing sessions;

8. Encourages the High Commissioner, within his mandate as set out in General Assembly resolution 48/141, to continue to seek effective ways to react rapidly to crises in the field of human rights and to continue to report on his activities in this regard to the competent bodies of the United Nations in the field of human rights, and requests the Secretary-General in this context to support activities proposed by the High Commissioner;

9. Decides to continue its consideration of this question at its fifty-second session under the agenda item "Human rights questions".